



## Brittany Murphy

**High school:** Davenport North High School

**Hometown:** Davenport, Iowa

**Majors:** Asian studies; history

**Minor:** Japanese

**Activities:** Phi Beta Kappa academic honor society

**Post-grad plans:** I have been accepted for a summer internship with the

Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) Legacy Center in Chicago.

“Brittany is a true scholar. Her research productivity these past few years would stoke the envy of many faculty members. Collaborating with her on a Freistat grant was a highlight of my career. Brittany has shaped my teaching and research interests, and I have learned from her.”

— Dr. Elizabeth Lawrence, assistant professor, history

### Why Augustana?

In high school, I knew I wanted only two things after graduation: to study Japanese while also staying close to home. The rest was unclear. Thankfully, Augustana provided everything I was dreaming of after graduation. It was just a short drive over the river, and it had a Japanese program.

That was more than enough for me — but it came as an added benefit that the campus was beautiful.

### Are you where you thought you'd be when you first came to campus?

Most definitely not. I originally envisioned majoring in computer science, but I found out that it wasn't for me. I pursued an Asian studies major because it would pair well with my Japanese minor, and I wanted to learn more about Asian culture.

I never once considered double majoring until my advisor, Dr. Elizabeth Lawrence, asked me to consider the possibility of adding a history major in the spring semester of my junior year. That opened a world of possibilities.

### Who helped you get to where you are now?

Aside from my family, of course, who supported me through everything, there are many on campus who helped me throughout my long journey. Dr. Umme Al-Wazedi introduced me to the field of Asian studies and helped to remind me that Asia is not and should not be limited to just discussions of East Asia.

Dr. Mari Nagase introduced me to the Japanese language and the highs and lows of trying to decipher new katakana words every Friday in JPN-101. Komura Sensei helped further my studies of Japanese throughout the upper levels.

Dr. Elizabeth Lawrence introduced me to a whole new world of learning during and after her Asian Studies Senior Inquiry class in my junior year. I found out that I have a passion for research and pursuing new and interesting topics I never thought were feasible, such as Japanese video games and movies, or even the history of Japanese gardens.

In many ways, all of the professors I had — from FYI to Senior Inquiry — helped me to get where I am today!

### Peak experience?

Traveling to Hawaii in March 2022 for a William F. Freistat Fellowship experience. I was able to travel to Honolulu with Dr. Lawrence and research the legacies of Japanese militarism in archives and at important sites of Asia Pacific War memory, such as Pearl Harbor.

Up until then, Hawaii seemed like a distant, far-off place I had little to do with. The experience showed me just how interconnected the entire Asia Pacific region is.

## MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2022

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

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### What surprised you?

I am most surprised by how far I've grown as a person and the things I was able to accomplish. I most definitely never anticipated going to academic conferences, nor did I imagine ever presenting at one.

### What will you miss the most?

Oddly enough, I think I will miss studying in the library the most. The library was always a sort of haven for me throughout my four years that stuck with me through thick and thin.

### Advice for the Class of 2026?

Don't feel pressured to have every detail of your future precisely planned out the moment you step on campus. If you keep an open mind throughout your liberal arts education, it might lead you to places you never even expected.